

**Abstract of the Disclosure:**

In a method of annealing a workpiece which has a substrate and a light absorption film on the substrate, a laser beam is irradiated onto a workpiece to only heat the light absorption film without any temperature rise of the substrate and to anneal an internal stress of the light absorption film. A wavelength of the laser beam is selected so as to be absorbed into the light absorption film. The workpiece may be a photo mask blank (or a photo mask) or a phase shift mask blank (or a phase shift mask).